COLONY of FROZEN in SHIPS

Not such an unpleasant time, even for the women, on the ten whalers nipped in the ice

Steamers Beluga and Bowhead in winter quarters.

A dance on the deck of the frozen in whaler.

HELEN HERSCHEL SHERMAN, daughter of Captain A. C. SHERMAN born on steamer Beluga in the far North

THE one chief topic of all old whalemen who are safe and snug on the shore this winter has been the imprisoned crews in the Arctic. Somewhere near the mouth of the Mackenzie River, on the north coast of North America, ten whaling craft are nipped in the ice, and the fate of the vessels, and the hardships that the five hundred men who compose their crews have suffered will not be known until late next summer, or in the fall, when the steamers arrive in San Francisco.

Not a single whaleman who has spent winters in the Arctic is fearful for the safety of the men, although some doubt whether all the ships will come out when the ice breaks up. All depends, it is said, whether the captains had a chance to get into the bays or harbors where their ships will be safe when the crush comes. New Bedford whalemen have often wintered at Herschel Island, and one season a few years ago half a dozen captains had their wives with them during the long Arctic winter. Life was gay that season, for the vessels selected a protected spot at Herschel Island, and there were parties, dances, concerts and even a minstrel show given by the crews. On several of the steamers there were pianos and among the women who spent the season there were Mrs. Porter, Mrs. A. C. Sherman and Mrs. Viola D. Cook, all wives of captains. Captain A. C. Sherman's daughter, now living in New Bedford, was born within the Arctic circle, and she has the honor of having been born farther north than any other American girl. Her name is Helen Herschel Sherman, and it indicates her birthplace.

Among the women now in the Arctic with the imprisoned whalemen is Mrs. Cook, whose husband commands the steam whaler Bowhead. Their home is in Provincetown, and the information brought from the north by Captain Amundsen, supplemented by information in messages received from Captain James A. Tilton, of the Alexander, by his wife, and from Captain Cook, indicates that the Alexander and Bowhead are certainly safe at Herschel Island. The Beluga and the Narwhal, two other large steamers, are also believed to be there. Six other vessels are to the eastward, between Kay Point and the mouth of the Mackenzie River. One schooner, the Bonanza, is known to be wrecked.

The real danger of the craft near Kay Point will come when the ice begins to move in the summer, and if they did not get out of the open roadstead at Kay Point, there is likely to be trouble ahead. It is no safer place than the spot off Point Barrow, where the fleet was nipped in the ice in 1898, and when three vessels were crushed.

Men who have wintered in the Arctic say that in spite of a shortage of provisions, as only three of the steamers were provisioned for wintering in the Arctic, the men may have some delicacies. There ought to be an abundance of venison, bear steak, white fish and other good food fish.

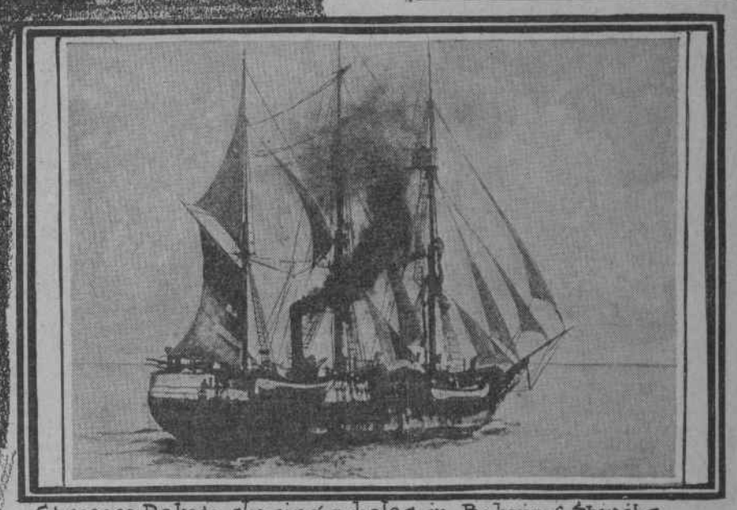
"The men of the crews are probably having the time of their life," said a captain, now retired, who has spent several winters at Herschel Island. "We used to enjoy Christmas up there, and the holiday season was as gay and lively as it is anywhere in the land. Our Christmas dinners were always feasts of good things, and a football game on the ice between picked teams was the after dinner sport. Although it was played during the Arctic night, the aurora borealis helped out, and some days it would be light enough to read a paper out of doors."

Some strange stories are told of the sports and hunts. One afternoon the crews were playing baseball on the ice, a few hundred yards from the ships, when a dark cloud was noticed. The men did not heed it, but suddenly it emptied snow on them. The man at the bat saw the pitcher begin the motion to deliver the ball, but that was the last he saw of the pitcher or any of his companions. Some of them he never saw alive again, for the curtain of snow shut him off from the rest of the world, and the players tried to find their way back to the ships. The squall came so suddenly that many lost their bearings, but while most of the players and the spectators found huts or ships in their hunt for shelter, a dozen of them, half of whom were Eskimos, perished close to the ships, and their bodies were found next day among the ice hummocks, almost within touch of their companions.

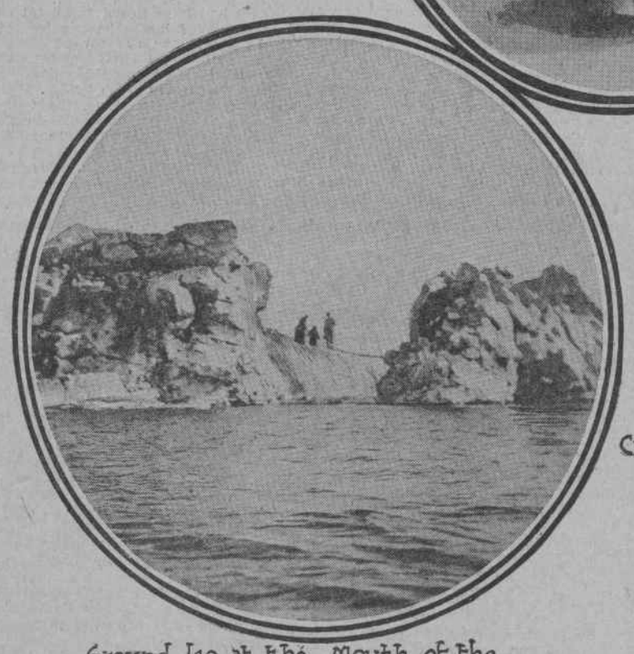
The upper decks of the steamers, housed for winter, are heated with stoves, and these form the ball rooms. Women of the Eskimo tribes have learned to dance "Yankee" fashion, and they enter into the dance with all the spirit of a prize waltzer. Each ship has its quota of Eskimos, hired hunters and fishermen, whose duty it is to supply fresh meats and fish, and in the month of February deer appear in the Herschel island region. The captains always take care to have a hole cut through the ice at the stern of the ships, and this is kept open in order that water may be obtained in case of fire. Fresh water ice is harvested, and each vessel cuts about one hundred tons, which is melted down in the ship's boilers as needed, and snow and ice is banked against the sides of the vessels as a protection against cold. Sometimes it has been necessary to keep the crews pulling down the ice banks and replacing them again for exercise. This is done in bad weather, when it is well to keep the men near the ships, and if a vessel is frozen in, with no other within several miles, it is often a daily programme in order that the sailors keep in the best of health.

Mrs. Cook says:—"Life in the North is enjoyable, notwithstanding the excessive cold and darkness and long desolation. During our winter at Baillie Island the temperature was as low as 57 degrees below zero, and for weeks it never rose above 50 degrees below. Coasting from the hills of Herschel Island down the long incline leading to the ice covered waters of the cove is a captivating pastime. What matters if one's nose or cheeks show frostbites? A snow application, followed by brisk rubbing, removes the frost and restores the circulation. Bundled as we are in furs, we suffer no ill except the frostbites on the face, and the ride down the white and long trail in the keen, bracing air is simply exhilarating."

Mrs. Cook made her first Arctic voyage for her health, but subsequent voyages with a similar purpose were unnecessary. She began her first cruise to the Arctic in 1893, weighing but 93 pounds when she started, and when she returned three years later she weighed 130 pounds. She has spent twelve winters and six summers in the Arctic, and one winter she was the only woman shut in in the Arctic in the region of Baillie Island, far east of Herschel. This winter her companion is Mrs. McGregor, wife of the captain of the steamer Karluk, although in the meagre reports that have been received here, the two ships are not frozen in together, as the captains plan to do when they mean to spend the winter in the Arctic.



Steamer Beluga chasing whales in Behring Straits



Ground Ice at the Mouth of the Mackenzie River.

Crews of whaler ashore for Fourth of July Sports at Herschel Island

An Incident of the Streets.

(Reported in the Maeterlinck Manner.)

AS I was walking leisurely along a city street this morning—one of those streets which leads toward the river to the westward—I beheld a horse which was firmly attached to a milk wagon running away with it desperately, I might say disastrously. The horse, exasperated no doubt by the ceaseless tumult and turmoil of the noisy and restless city, had caught a glimpse of the distant hills and fields of New Jersey and was excitedly laying his course in that direction. Beyond question the hysteric brute reasoned that if he could once more reach the pastures and pastimes of his youth the disagreeable and thankless task of his daily rounds would terminate in a happy conclusion.

Strange, thought I, that all horses are not possessed of such bucolic sentiments, and, in the manner of this one, declare themselves and break into open revolution against their enslaver, man. And still, my thoughts ran on, if they were actuated by such motives we should have no cream in our coffee for several mornings; or, at least, until man, in his invincible ingenuity, had discovered other means whereby he should serve his customers.

Suddenly the wagon struck the curb at the corner, or it may have been the hydrant, that hard iron source of our soft water, and it was overturned upon the sidewalk with a resounding crash of the fragile milkware within. Now, methought, the beast, freed from his attachments, will hasten rapidly on beyond the river and wander once more amid the hills and green fields grown dearer to him through the years of absence.

But no, he did not hasten. On the contrary, to my utter astonishment, he stopped of his own accord and, turning quietly toward the wreck, he seemed to be contemplating the discomfited vehicle with profound delight. Verily, I exclaimed to myself, it was not the spirit of freedom which stirred within the dumb brute, but the spirit of destruction, and my former feelings of sympathy in his desire for liberty, which is implanted in every living thing, were changed to those of condemnation for his malicious wantonness.

I approached the wreck to offer some advice to the driver, who came running from a house at which he had left a quart of milk, as all the others were doing who had been attracted to the spot, and at once I perceived the reason for the strange action of the horse in not continuing his flight. The sidewalk was flooded with a white sea of milk, which rippled along the stones and flowed merrily over the curb into the gutter. New milk, sweet milk, fresh from the cows and redolent of fields and fragrant grass. This the horse had smelled, this breath from the meadows of his colthood, and in his dumb unreason, his illogical instinct, he had concluded that he had reached the haven he sought.

The driver began cursing the horse with malignant viciousness.

"Don't, I beg of you," I pleaded, placing a restraining hand on his arm. "Why do you ruthlessly condemn the poor brute, which was merely following an impulse of its better nature?"

"Oh, that's what you call it, is it?" he leered at me, contemptuously—I may say savagely. "Well, I'd like to know how th'ell I'm to get paid for that spilt milk?"

I was so shocked by this unexpected manifestation of such an unfeeling brutalism that I dared not compare the horse with the man without shame to my own kind, and I hastened sadly away from the scene.

Concerning the Clock.

DID you ever take time to consider the clock? You should have done so, if you have not, seeing the clock gives you the time whenever you ask it.

(No, this is no joke. It is a plain statement of fact.)

The clock is so sensitive that it constantly keeps its hands before its face. This is due to the fact that through no fault of its own it has been doing time for many years in the most public manner. It may be that as the face of the clock has no eyes, nor mouth, nor nose, nor chin, nor cheeks, nor any of the usual facial appurtenances, it keeps its hands over it to hide these defects. But this can scarcely be, we fancy, because its hands have no fingers nor thumbs, nor has it any arms, and any attempt to conceal one defect would only expose another.

Most clocks have only two hands, but many have three, and it is somewhat remarkable, anatomically as well as numerically, that the third hand is the second hand. It may also be remarked that the minute hand is not the minute hand, for it is longer than the hour hand.

The clock had neither feet nor legs, but it runs just the same. It may be fast or slow, but it does not walk. It always runs, and it never runs up. It runs down unless it is kept running round. Providence wisely did not give feet to the clock.

The clock has a key, but no lock, and for that reason even the most ignorant person never tries to open a clock with the key.

Some clocks strike and some do not, but no clock ever strikes with its hands. Just why a clock should be so peculiar is no affair of ours.

(Of course this is no joke. The striking of a clock may be an affair of hours, but it is not spelled the same way. We are not trying to be funny. This is a dignified article. Please do not interrupt us again.)

That passage in Scripture which says "By their works shall ye know them" does not refer to clocks, but it might well have done so, because that is the way a good clock is known.

The clock speaks a universal language, and no matter whether it is a German clock, or French, or Spanish, or Italian, it can tell you the time just as distinctly as if it were plain Yankee.

The clock differs from all other human affairs in that while their operations end when they are wound up, the clock's do not begin until they are wound up.

There are no clocks in heaven, because there is no time there. Neither is there any night, and an eight day clock wouldn't know when to stop.

A Pre-eminent American Industry.

THE handy little button, which does important duty to-day not only as a convenient fastening but as a decoration, has been in general use for a comparatively short time. It was not till the reign of Elizabeth that button making became an industry, though prior to that time buttons, usually made of precious metals, were used by the people of wealth.

The first button establishment in this country is supposed to have been founded in Philadelphia prior to 1750. Brass was the material used then. Late in the century another factory was started in Philadelphia, where wooden buttons were made. It was necessary at the time of the Revolutionary War to import the buttons used by Continental soldiers from France. The first metal button factory in Waterbury, Conn., which is now the centre of the metal button industry, was established just prior to 1800.

Samuel Williston, of Easthampton, Mass., founded the industry of manufacturing by machinery buttons covered with cloth. The process has been greatly improved until now nearly all the work is done automatically. Until 1892, however, the lasting and other parts used to cover buttons were imported. Now, for the most part, they are made in this country.

The manufacture of vegetable ivory buttons, the raw material for which is a seed of a South American palm, was introduced in 1859. These buttons, dyed in various colors and made in various patterns, are still very popular. The next step was the manufacture of composition buttons. They are made in many colors and designs. Horn and certain other materials are also used.

During the last ten years the manufacture of pearl buttons has become most important. Its development is due to the discovery of the vast quantities of mussel shells in the Mississippi River. Formerly these were considered of no value, but so valuable are the shells for this purpose that a new and important industry has sprung up in Iowa and Illinois. In the last census report the industry was given a special report.

Though the manufacture of pearl buttons is a comparatively new industry in this country, the value of the product in 1900 formed forty-eight and four-tenths per cent of the entire value of the button output. These include the mother of pearl buttons, made from shells brought from South Australia and the South Sea Islands, and those made from the shells of the unio, which come from the Mississippi River. These last are called fresh water pearl buttons. In 1890 there was not a single fresh water pearl button made in the United States.

The Morale of Poetry.

Although you write the tiny song
That fits a fancy card,
Or reel off that empurpled stuff
That's purchased by the yard;
Or be it but a baked bean ad.,
Expend your finest skill
And make the product worthy of
The imprint of your will.

And then you'll shine a deathless star
And caper in your glee
In this and that and t'other big
Six pound anthology.
And in a steam yacht made of gold
Across the sea you'll fly,
And build up health and muscle through
The medium of pie.

R. H. MUNKITTRICK.

The Electrical Industry.

THE electrical industry, though a comparatively new field for development, is destined to be the greatest of all mechanical interests. Facts concerning its widespread interest are rare. The Census Office has attempted little in collecting such statistics till recently, but the inquiries of the permanent Census Office have resulted in some remarkable facts. There are in the United States 580 establishments, with a capital of $83,130,943, some 5,000 offices and 40,890 wage earners, produced apparatus and supplies in 1900 valued at $91,348,889. There were, however, reports considered from 132 other establishments making apparatus of an electrical character as part of their business, and, all told, these 712 concerns turned out product to the value of $104,738,719.

Nor was this in reality the limit, for it is pointed out in the report that many companies, within and outside the electrical field, build a great deal of their own apparatus for themselves, but not for sale. No account, moreover, is taken of electric launches, automobiles or locomotives, these being accounted for in the respective branches of shipbuilding, carriage building and locomotive building, while they obviously include and duplicate some apparatus already reported otherwise by electrical manufacturers. There is also no inclusion of any electro-chemical or electro-metallurgical products, although well nigh all our copper is refined electrically and all our aluminum, carborundum, calcium, carbide, &c., is the product of electricity.

While electrical manufacturing is shown to be chiefly concentrated in some six Eastern and two Middle or Western States, the industry is fairly widespread, its data being furnished by no fewer than nineteen States. It is a little surprising to see Pennsylvania head the list of States, with a total of nearly 21,000,000, but New York had nearly 18,000,000 and Illinois nearly 12,000,000.

Canned Goods in China.

UNDER normal conditions American canned goods command a large sale and may be said to control the market in China. The fruits and vegetables give universal satisfaction, and while the Chinese, since the boycott began, have either refrained altogether from buying or have made their purchases under cover, their sale to the foreigners has been satisfactory to the importers. The natives use condensed milk extensively, but seldom indulge in cream.

The manufacturers of Swiss milk have entered the market with a good brand and allow Chinese merchants from sixty to ninety days in which to make a settlement. This plan enables the native dealers to dispose of a part if not all of their purchases before payment is due, and the system has given so much satisfaction that the sales are steadily increasing.

The English control the jam and preserve market and are so strongly intrenched that it would appear an almost impossible task to dislodge them. The recognized merit and well deserved popularity of the goods have not, however, deterred American manufacturers from entering the field, but the results thus far have not been particularly encouraging. The American product is sweet, clean and palatable, but it is put up in cheap, unattractive tin cans with labels that, to say the least, are not exactly artistic. The English can is enamelled, and when placed on the table rather creates a desire to "look see," as the Chinese say, as to what is contains.

Australian butter and meats, exported in ships containing refrigerating plants and kept constantly in cold storage after their arrival in Hong Kong, control the market because they are good and wholesome and comparatively inexpensive. Their sale, however, is confined largely to the foreigners.

The committee of the International Exhibition which is to be held at Milan this year will probably organize a lottery, the first prize of which will be $200,000.

New Fireproof Material.

COLONEL ICHENETSKY, of the Russian army, has invented a new fireproof material called uralite. This name is given it in honor of the Ural Mountains, where large quantities of asbestos, which goes to make up a large part of uralite, is found. It has proved a highly efficacious fire resisting material, capable of withstanding a much greater degree of heat, without exhibiting any apparent effect, than any fireproof material at present on the market. Coupled with this fact it is extremely light, it is of great strength, is durable, and is manufactured in sheets of varying size and thickness, thus rendering it a first class material for building purposes.

Uralite is composed largely of asbestos, but this is by no means the only substance used in its manufacture. Asbestos in its pure form, although it will resist high degrees of heat, is liable to disintegrate under the influence of excessive temperature. For this reason its utility is limited. The most noticeable feature of uralite is the facility with which it may be handled and adapted to other materials as a protection against fire.

It can be glued and nailed without any fear of its splitting during the latter process. It is specially available for panelling or other similar purposes, and can be grained or otherwise treated precisely as if it were wood. It does not swell or shrink under fluctuating climatic conditions, is waterproof and is a complete electric insulator.

The remarkable immunity of the material from climatic changes may be gathered from the the fact that a piece of the substance may be plunged into boiling water and then immediately steeped in frozen mercury without showing any shrinking, disintegration or other change, physical or chemical. It is capable of withstanding a great strain—eighteen tons per square inch in comparison with Portland cement, which is only capable of supporting nine tons—so that it is an ideal material for flooring and ceilings.